

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the present application.

At the outset, Applicants wish to thank Examiner Lopez for the helpful and courteous discussion with their undersigned Representative on June 1, 2006. During this discussion, the amendment presented herein to define the second group of a plurality of heating elements as being “five or more heating elements.” This relationship between this specific amendment and the art referenced in the outstanding rejections was discussed. The content of this discussion is reflected in the amendments and remarks set forth herein. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention provides, in part, a bending apparatus for bending at least one glass sheet placed on a bending mold into a desired shape by heating in a furnace, which comprises a bending mold for placing at least one glass sheet thereon, a tunnel-like heating furnace through which the bending mold is conveyed, a first group of a plurality of heating elements fixed on an inner wall of the heating furnace, and a radiation-heating device having a second group of a plurality of heating elements placed separably from the inner wall surface of the heating furnace,

wherein said second group of a plurality of heating elements of said radiation-heating device are mounted on a *heater rack* that may be moved to increase or decrease the distance between said second group of a plurality of heating elements and said glass sheet, wherein said second group of a plurality of heating elements comprises five or more heating elements, and

wherein the temperature of each heating element of said second group of a plurality of heating elements may be individually controlled (Claim 1).

Applicants submit that GB 836,560 (GB '560), individually or combined with Kamata, does not affect the patentability of the same for the following reasons.

The rejections of: (a) Claims 1-4, 11, 12, 17, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over GB 836560 (hereinafter "GB '560"); (b) Claims 1-4, 11, 12, 17, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over GB '560, and (c) Claims 5, 13, 18, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over GB '560 in view of Kamata, are obviated by amendment.

Further, Applicants submit that GB '560 fails to disclose or suggest that the second group of a plurality of heating elements that are mounted upon a heater rack are five or more.

In the outstanding Office Action the Examiner continued to maintain his position that the claimed invention reads on GB '560. It appears that this position is based, in part, on the disclosure at page 3, lines 79-85 of GB '560. However, the Examiner also pointed to Figure 3 of GB '560 as providing support for multiple crease heaters 88 being mounted upon a single axel rod 96.

Figure 3 of GB '560 does appear to provide support for a *single pair* of crease heaters 88 being mounted on an axel rod 96. In referring to the axel rod, it appears that the Examiner is interpreting the axel rod as being a heater rack, which Applicants are willing to accept for the sake of argument. However, even if Figure 3 of GB '560 does disclose crease heaters mounted on an axel rod, this still would not meet the heater rack limitation of the claimed invention where the second group of a plurality of heating elements is mounted on a heater rack such that the plurality is five or more. Specifically, Figure 3 is merely a two-

dimensional cross-section view of the bending Lehr. The Examiner attention is directed to the bending Lehr of GB '560 illustrated in Figure 10 in which many pairs of crease heaters 88 are arranged throughout the bending Lehr where each single pair of crease heaters 88 is mounted on an axel rod. Therefore, the apparatus of GB '560 would require an axel rod 96 for each pair of crease heaters 88. As such, the crease heaters 88 cited by the Examiner as being the claimed "second group of a plurality heating elements," are mounted on *many* individual axel rods, which is certainly not the same as a heater rack.

In contrast, the present invention the claims have been amended to define the minimum number of heating elements mounted on the heater rack as being "5 or more heating elements." (see Claims 1 and 6). Even if the Examiner's interpretation of an axel rod as being a heater rack is correct, Applicants submit that the disclosure at page 3, lines 79-85 of GB '560, as well as Figures 3 and 10 only support mounting of two crease heaters upon the axel rod. At no point does GB '560 disclose or suggest that the axel rod would support any more than two crease heaters. As such, Applicants submit that the present invention is not anticipated by or obvious in view of the disclosure of GB '560.

Kamata is cited as disclosing "heating elements having a heating plate have heater wires." However, Kamata does not compensate for the aforementioned deficiencies in the disclosure of GB '560. Specifically, Kamata is also silent with respect to a *second* group of a plurality of heating elements that are mounted on a heater rack, much less the number of the same.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the claimed invention is not anticipated by or obvious in view of GB '560, individually or combined with Kamata. Acknowledgement that these grounds of rejection have been withdrawn is requested.

Finally, Applicants remind the Examiner that MPEP §821.04 states:

...if applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims which depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim *will* be rejoined. (*emphasis added*)

Upon a finding of allowability of the elected product claims, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of the withdrawn process claims.

Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance.

Early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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